

a¹ through the deodorizing filter 28 and is cleaned, and is then discharged to the outside of the apparatus through the exhaust fan 29.

Please replace page 16, 1st full paragraph as follows:

A² Fig. 2 shows a sequence for determining the minimum standby time of a next thermal developing sheet. If the sheet B to be next developed thermally is an mth sheet, the last (previous to the sheet B) sheet A is an (m-1)th sheet. The (m-1)th sheet A is thermally developed in the state of temperature stability of a processing machine. In that case, information about the size of the sheet A (e.g., length L_{m-1} and width W_{m-1}) is acquired from an exposing machine, the processing machine or a sensor (step S1). The minimum standby time (a minimum time required for temperature recovery) TLA is acquired from a versus-length minimum standby time table by the length of the sheet A, for the sheet B to be next processed.

Please amend page 16, 2nd full paragraph as follows:

A³ The versus-length minimum standby time table is created in a following way. At first, all variations of the sheet sizes in the direction of the length among the sheets that are planned to be used with this apparatus are classified into n steps of groups according to the size in the direction of the length. For example, as illustrated in step S2 of Figure 2, in the first group a lower length L_{min} of a sheet is less than or equal to a length L_{m-1} of sheet m-1, and the length L_{m-1} is less than upper length L_1 of a sheet. A similar relationship exists for the remaining groups 2 through n. Then stored data is obtained by measuring a recovery time (a minimum standby time based on the length) required from passage through a heating device (a heating roller) to recovery (of the heating device) to a developing temperature for each group (e.g., $TL_1 \dots TL_i \dots TL_n$ as the group

A3 developing temperatures illustrated in Figure 2). For example, for the first group, developing temperature TL1 is chosen based on the above-described length.

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 16 and 17 as follows:

A4 Accordingly, if the sheet (m-1) which is being thermally developed has a length L_{m-1} that corresponds to a group having lengths of $L_{(i-1)}$ to L_i (such that L_{i-1} is less than or equal to L_{m-1} , and L_{m-1} is less than or equal to L_i) in the versus-length minimum standby time table of a step S2, the minimum standby time is set to TL1 and the thermal developing temperature is recovered after the minimum standby time TL1 passes. Therefore, the sheet m to be next developed may be fed to the heating device.

Please amend page 17, 1st full paragraph as follows:

A5 Similarly, a versus-width minimum standby time table is created for the size in the direction of a width. More specifically, the versus-width minimum standby time table is created in a following way. At first, all variations of the sheet sizes in the direction of the width among the sheets that are planned to be used with this apparatus are classified into n steps of groups according to the size in the direction of the width. For example, as illustrated in step S5 of Figure 2, in the first group a lower width W_{min} of a sheet is less than or equal to a width W_{m-1} of sheet m-1, and the width W_{m-1} is less than upper width W_1 of a sheet. A similar relationship exists for the remaining groups 2 through n. Then stored data is obtained by measuring a recovery time (a minimum standby time based on the width) required from passage through a heating device (a heating roller) to recovery (of the heating device) to a developing temperature for each group (e.g., $TW_1...TW_i...TW_n$ as the group developing temperatures illustrated in Figure 2). For